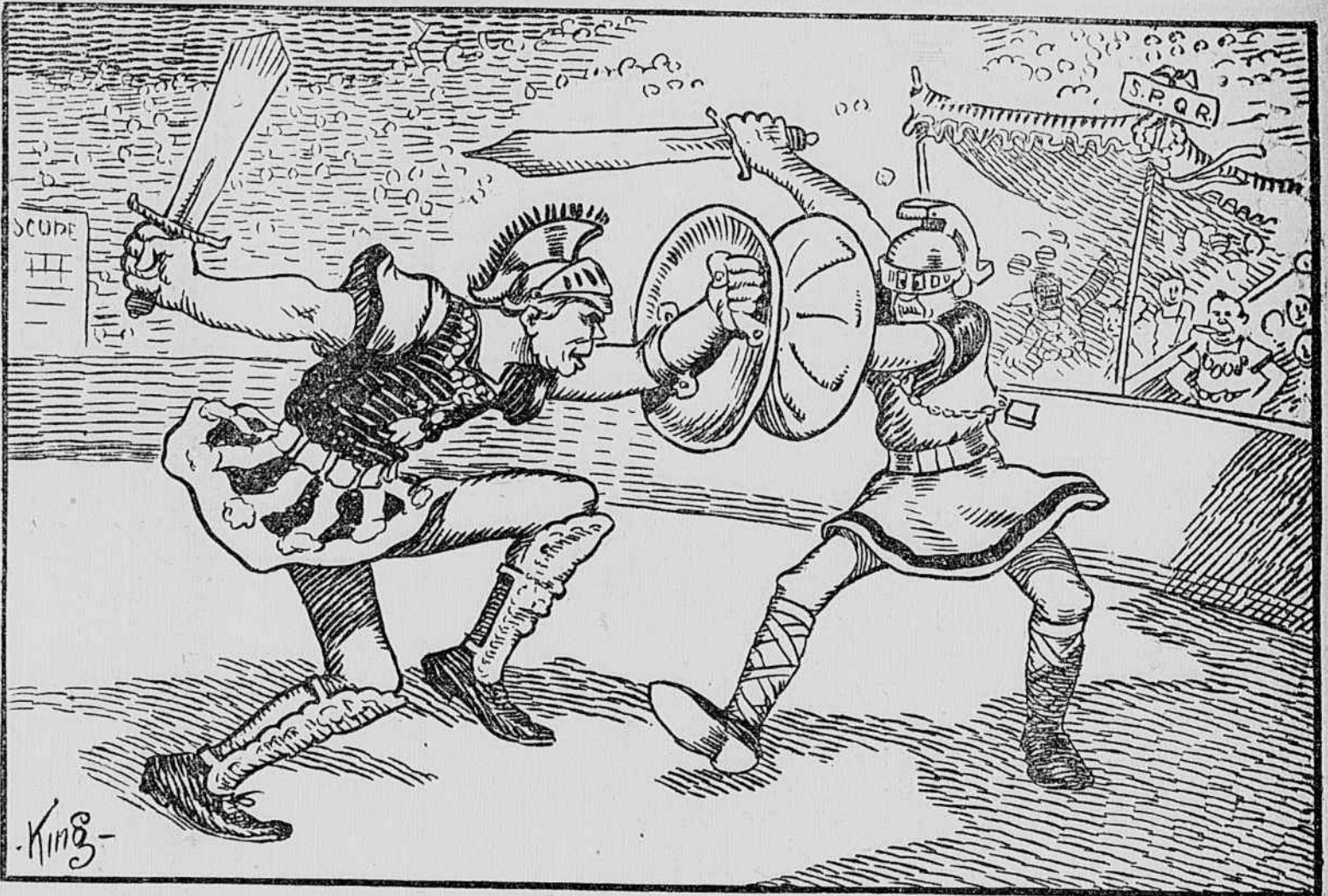


MR. DOOLEY ON ROMAN HISTORY

BY FINLEY PETER DUNNE



"Ivry mornin' he come into Rome an' wrote pieces fr th' pa-aper."

"I'll put me hands in me pockets an' say: 'They're both frinds iv mine. Let thim kill each other.'"

"T'S been a fine warm day, it has, thanks be," said Mr. Hennessy, laying his dinner pail on the end of the bar and mopping his brow with his sleeve. "A rare injeyable spring day. Why, Martin, what ails ye? Has anything happened?"

"Nawthin'," said Mr. Dooley. "Nawthin' at all, on'y I was thinkin' iv th' horrible fate iv th' republic whin ye come in. 'Tis all well enough fr light hearted, divvie-may-care fellows like ye'er self to look on this illiction as a horse race or a dog fight, but to th' idjicated classes like meself 'tis th' cause iv manny a sleepless night. Why, sir, accordin' to th' pa-aper I hold in me hand, while ye're standin' there so cheerfully restin' wan foot afther th' other on th' railin', th' ship iv

state is standin' on th' verge of a volcano. It is so. It's goin' th' way of Rome an' Athens an' Syracuse an' Utica an' all way stations between New York an' Buffalo.

"All ye know iv th' histhry iv America is what ye read in American histhry. No intelligen' man who wants to get advance information about this country reads th' histhry iv America. It's too cheerful. Whin he is lookin' fr a line on what's goin' to happen in this here land iv th' free he pulls th' histhry iv Rome fr'm th' shelf, an' befure he's read far he makes up his mind he'd better jump into th' South Branch thin be et up be th' lions in th' Coliseum th' day afther th' con-vintion. In less thin a year's time, as I figure it out, me boy, ye an' Hogan will be glad'yators fightin' it out with swords, while I'll be settin' in th' front row iv th' grand stand urgin' ye on. I'll play no fav'rites. I'll not keep me thumbs up or me thumbs down. I'll put me hands in me pockets an' say: 'They're both frinds iv mine. Let thim kill each other.'"

"I had no idee it was so bad last night. I went to bed thinkin' th' country was safe. So I put out th' cat, locked th' dore, counted th' cash, said me prayers, wound th' clock, an' pulled into th' siddin' fr th' night. Whin I got up I had a feelin' that somethin' was burnin', th' same as I had th' mornin' iv th' big fire. But I cudden't find annything wrong till I opened up th' pa-apers an', much to me relief, found that it was not me pants but th' republic that was on fire. Yes, sir; th' republic is doomed to destruction again. Here it is in black an' white fr'm th' lips iv wan iv th' most larned men in th' wurld, th' dean iv a college down east. I don't know what th' dean iv a college has to do fr a livin' unless he's a gr-rear scholar like Brother Alexis at th' big school, whose jooty it is to wallop th' cigareet habit out iv th' inmates or undergrajates. Annyhow he's a gr-rear man."

"He set up th' night befure with Pro-fessor Butler an' Pro-fessor Bill Barnes an' other mimbers iv th' faculty burnin' th' midnight ile over th' returns fr'm Ohio, an' whin th' mornin' come he rang th' bell an' got all th' little fellows into th' classroom, an' says he: 'I will open up th' exercises this bright May mornin' be announcin' that I despair iv th' republic. Boys, stop shufflin' yer feet. Mikey Donahue, put away that gum or I'll be down on ye with a ruler. To raysoom, me discourse,' he says, 'this country, so far as I can make out fr'm me window, an' Rome, as I raymber it, ar-re in exactly th' same fix. Both were founded by Romulus an' Remus an' both ar-re largely inhabited be th' lower order iv Eyetallians. Fr'manny hundred years Rome sat on her seven hills an' was oncomfortable an' fidgety an' often changed her position, an' small blame to her. I don't know how many hills this country sets upon. I'm not th' pro-fessor iv jography. But it's at laste siven. So ye see th' two countries are exactly alike."

"Now, little wans, what happened to Rome? Rome was destroyed. An' who destroyed her? Answer me that. [A voice: "Ye did, teacher."] I did not. It was Joolyus Cayzar. An' what was Joolyus Cayzar like? As I raymber him he

was a short, thick set party, wearin' eyeglasses, a frind iv th' Harvester Thrust, an' livin' in a two-an-a-half story house on th' shores iv Long Island. Ivry mornin' he come into Rome an' wrote pieces fr th' pa-aper which are now set as a task fr little boys to translate into English. He was impror twict, an' whin he come back fr'm Africa he thried to get th' job again away fr'm his old frind Pompey. Durin' th' campaign he uthured th' mim'able sayin: "Aut Cayzar aut nullus," which, bein' translated, manes: "Ye've got to take me or Taft." He was attacked in th' sinit chamber be th' boy he took to raise whin he exclaimed, "O, you Elihu," an' threw him out iv th' window.

"I've told ye enough now to show ye that there ain't th' width iv ye'er thumb diff'rence between Rome an' this country. If this thing isn't stopped an' if th' illiction doesn't go th' way me boss th' prisdint iv this college an' his frind Bill wants it, in a few years' time th' liberties iv this people will be destroyed, th' poplace will have to go to free circuses ivry afternoon with a loaf iv free bread under their ar-rm, an' whin Cayzar dies we'll see Hinner Cabin Lodge fallin' on his soord in Nahant an' Gifford Pinshow pursued into Pannyma an' destroyed be Nick Longworth, who'll come back to rule over us an' maybe play his fiddle while Cincinnati is burnin' at his feet. We'll all be slaves, dhressed in white sheets with garlands iv roses in our hair, takin' our meals in bed an' dhrinkin' great pans iv Falerminum wine, which I had some iv it wanst whin I was abroad, an' it's poor stuff an' does ye no good unless ye devote all ye'er wakin' hours to it. I can dwell no longer on this dhradful pitcher iv th' future iv this country. Th' on'y way ye can get away fr'm it is to injooce ye'er fathers to vote fr Pompey. Ye can now take a recess while I go down to th' dhurg store on th' corner an' buy meself a shell iv hemlock, fr I do not care to live," he says. An' th' onthinkin' little vaggybones, ormindful iv th' doom iv their country, went out an' choose up sides fr a baseball game."

"Afther readin' this obichury notice I thried to get some consolation, d'ye mind, out iv th' iditoryal page iv me fav'rite journal, but 'twas worse there. Th' iditoryal writer had been so broken hearted be th' prospect iv Joolyus Cayzar landin' again that he cudden't write annything new, so he got two tickets fr th' theayter fr himself an' wife fr'm th' dhramatic critic an' slung in as an iditoryal an essay that got him second money at th' grajatin' exercises in th' Univarsty iv Oklahoma an' let it go at that. 'Twas called, 'Is Our Civilization a Failure? It Is.' He said th' ship iv state was already on th' rocks, th' thunderbolt had fallen, th' die was cast, th' sun had concealed its face, we stood between Scylla an' Charybdis, th' pale augurs were rushin' fr'm th' temple, an' th' sacred edifice built up be th' fore-fathers iv some iv us was shaken to its very foundations, an' th' busts iv Wash'nton an' Jefferson had already fallen fr'm th' brackets on th' wall an' were scattered all over th' flure. I felt like callin' 'Polls.' Yet afther I had ca'med down enough to read th' rest iv th' pa-aper it seemed that nobody else but th' iditor an' th' pro-fessor

thought annything was th' matter. Th' colyums was filled with accounts iv baseball, assault an' bathtry, elopemints, an' th' usual summer pastimes iv th' poplace. An' whin I observed that th' White Sox were keepin' up their winnin' streak while their country was on th' skids I become steady enough to broach th' kag fr th' day's thrade.

"Still it's pretty bad, mind ye. I don't want ye to imagine that ye'er liberties aren't in gr-rear danger. On'y I wudden't think too much about it. Pick out some conjaynial emplymint like pushin' a wheel barrah to take ye'er mind off it. Resoom ye'er customary occypation. Me an' th' pro-fessor will keep a close lookout, an' just as th' republic is topplin' over into th' abyss I'll send Cassidy's boy down to th' mills to whistle ye out, an' ye can jump into Canada, where they have a stable government with ample stablin' fr th' kind iv people that think this country is goin' to be destroyed. No, don't knock off wurruk now. Ivrything may come out all right. If Roon is starin' Columbya in th' face, as this iditor says,

thin 'tis like as not Columbya will slam Roon over th' head with her parasol an' march haughtily on. She's a beautiful young lady, but she has th' wallop in ayether hand an' can protect herself without callin' th' polls.

"An', faith, now that I look back on it, this country has been on th' brink iv destruction iver since I can raymber ivry four years between June an' October. It may be no worse now. Maybe th' ship iv state is all right. As Hogan's boy said at th' grajatin' exercises: 'Sail on, he says, 'O ship iv state. Sail on, O union,' he says, 'sthrong an' gr-rear. Fear not each sudden sound,' he says, 'an' shock. Don't ye give a dam so long as we like ye. Ye're all right, on'y sail on. Don't stop,' he says. 'Twas something like that."

"D'ye think," said Mr. Hennessy, "that if Tiddy is illicted he'll be like that Joolyus Cayzar an' give us a free circus ivry day?"

"Isn't that what he did whin he had th' job befure?" said Mr. Dooley.

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